

WE CLAIM:

1. A computer program product comprising a computer program operable to control a computer to apply a plurality of anti computer virus tests to a target computer file, said computer program comprising:

(i) a library of anti computer virus test drivers; and
(ii) a test engine operable to apply a plurality of anti computer virus tests to said target computer file as specified by anti computer virus test drivers read from said library; wherein

(i) said anti computer virus test drivers within said library have a classification relating to priority of use in testing said target computer file; and

(ii) said anti computer virus test drivers are applied by said test engine in a priority order dependent upon classification whereby, if testing is terminated before completion, then the highest priority tests will have been applied.

2. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said classification may specify an anti computer virus test driver as relating to at least one of:

- (i) a newly released virus;
- (ii) a highly infectious virus;
- (iii) a highly damaging virus;
- (iv) a common virus;
- (v) a test that is quick to perform;
- (vi) an average threat level virus;
- (vii) a rare virus; and
- (viii) a test that is slow to perform.

3. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said priority order is also dependent upon a file type of said target computer file.

4. A computer program product as claimed in claim 1, wherein a plurality of different anti computer virus programs may trigger testing of said target computer file and said priority order is also dependent upon which anti computer virus program triggered said testing.

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5. A computer program product as claimed in claim 4, wherein said plurality of anti computer virus programs include at least one of:

- (i) an e-mail body scanner;
- (ii) an e-mail attachment scanner;
- 10 (iii) an on-access scanning agent;
- (iv) an on-demand scanner;
- (v) a firewall scanner; and
- (vi) a network server scanner.

15 6. A method of applying a plurality of anti computer virus tests to a target computer file, said method comprising:

(i) applying a plurality of anti computer virus tests to said target computer file as specified by anti computer virus test drivers read from a library of anti computer virus test drivers; wherein

- 20 (i) said anti computer virus test drivers within said library have a classification relating to priority of use in testing said target computer file; and
- (ii) said anti computer virus test drivers are applied in a priority order dependent upon classification whereby, if testing is terminated before completion, then the highest priority tests will have been applied.

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7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said classification may specify an anti computer virus test driver as relating to at least one of:

- (i) a newly released virus;
- (ii) a highly infectious virus;
- 30 (iii) a highly damaging virus;
- (iv) a common virus;

- (v) a test that is quick to perform;
- (vi) an average threat level virus;
- (vii) a rare virus; and
- (viii) a test that is slow to perform.

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8. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said priority order is also dependent upon a file type of said target computer file.

9. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein a plurality of different anti
10 computer virus programs may trigger testing of said target computer file and said priority order is also dependent upon which anti computer virus program triggered said testing.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein said plurality of anti computer
15 virus programs include at least one of:

- (i) an e-mail body scanner;
- (ii) an e-mail attachment scanner;
- (iii) an on-access scanning agent;
- (iv) an on-demand scanner;
- 20 (v) a firewall scanner; and
- (vi) a network server scanner.

11. Apparatus for applying a plurality of anti computer virus tests to a target computer file, said apparatus comprising:

25 (i) a memory operable to store a library of anti computer virus test drivers; and

(ii) processing circuits operable to serve as a test engine to apply a plurality of anti computer virus tests to said target computer file as specified by anti computer virus test drivers read from said library; wherein

30 (i) said anti computer virus test drivers within said library have a classification relating to priority of use in testing said target computer file; and

(ii) said anti computer virus test drivers are applied by said test engine in a priority order dependent upon classification whereby, if testing is terminated before completion, then the highest priority tests will have been applied.

5 12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said classification may specify an anti computer virus test driver as relating to at least one of:

- (i) a newly released virus;
- (ii) a highly infectious virus;
- (iii) a highly damaging virus;
- 10 (iv) a common virus;
- (v) a test that is quick to perform;
- (vi) an average threat level virus;
- (vii) a rare virus; and
- (viii) a test that is slow to perform.

15 13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said priority order is also dependent upon a file type of said target computer file.

20 14. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein a plurality of different anti computer virus programs may trigger testing of said target computer file and said priority order is also dependent upon which anti computer virus program triggered said testing.

25 15. Apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein said plurality of anti computer virus programs include at least one of:

- (i) an e-mail body scanner;
- (ii) an e-mail attachment scanner;
- (iii) an on-access scanning agent;
- (iv) an on-demand scanner;
- 30 (v) a firewall scanner; and
- (vi) a network server scanner.